

Thoughts on the Daily Word

15th Week of Year. Saturday 18th July. Readings: Micah 2:1-5; Psalm: 9B; Matthew 12:14-21.

Jesus does not engage the pharisees in today's Gospel reading. He steps back and focuses on his mission, which demands that who he is becomes clear. Sometimes we presume that a calling or vocation is about what we do as opposed to who we are. The Gospel puts these two things together in Jesus, pointing the way to our own vocation. This is a radical challenge from our own times when even the word 'vocation' is no longer used very often. We still know that describing someone as having a vocation is a compliment, meaning that they are wholeheartedly committed to what they are doing. In a world without faith, however, we accentuate the freedom of choice rather than the sense in the word vocation of being called. That denotes something beyond ourselves, something that is we surrender to as well as give ourselves to. Today we also listen to the prophet Micah, of whom we know little except that he prophesied around the time of Isaiah and eventually during the fall of Samaria, the northern kingdom in 722 BC. Like Elijah before him he castigates the rich for taking the property and children of the poor. This is more than unjust. The land, belonging to every Israelite, meant that they were a part of the People of God, that they had rights and dignity as well as a share in the calling or vocation of Israel. To take that away and put Israelites into slavery was the exact opposite of what the Exodus story was all about. The mission of the People of God to bring freedom and liberation to a broken world. Jesus follows in the line of the prophets to bring a remnant of Israel into freedom and fulfil its mission to the world.